

the clergy appeared in their finest vestments,
their acolytes
swinging censers and ringing bells, the military
and municipal bands discoursing music, the white-gowned
girls carrying
banners, and the boys scattering roses and
golden broom-
Although Jules Zola eventually lost all faith
in the
dogmas of the Roman Church, the pomp of its
cult impressed
him throughout his life, as is shown by many
passages to-
his works. And in his boyhood the processions
of Aix:
delighted him. He himself sometimes took part
in them —
acting on at least one occasion, in 1856, as a
clarinet player¹
of the college *fanfare*, for his friend Marguery
had imparted
to him some taste for music.

• Then as now Aix had its theatre, which
Zola and his
young friends patronised whenever they
could afford a franc
for a pit seat; but they eschewed *caf * life
and the gambling
which usually attends it in the provinces,
for whenever
they had time at their disposal they
infinitely preferred to
roam the country. The environs of Aix are
strangely picturesque. There is the famous Mont Ste.
Victoire, ascended
through thickets of evergreen' oaks and
holly, pines, wild
roses, and junipers, till at last only some
box plants dot the
precipitous slopes, veined like marble;
while in a cavern
near the summit is the weird bottomless pit
of Le Garagay,

whose demon-spirits Margaret of Anjou
vainly interrogated
in "Anne of Geierstein." Again, there is the
historic castle
of Vauvenargues, the ruined castle of
Puyricard, the her-
mitage of St. Honorat; and there are other
mountainous
hills with goat paths, gorges, and ravines,
and also stretches
of plain, watered now by the Arc or the
Torse, now by the
canal which Frangois Zola planned. In his
son's youth,
that canal had not yet transformed the
thirsty expanse;